

APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS

Access & Habitat Program
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
4034 Fairview Industrial Dr SE
Salem, OR 97302

I/We, [Manulife Investment Management Forest Management Inc.](#) of [La Grande](#), Oregon, hereby make application for financial assistance under the terms and conditions of the Access and Habitat program in the amount [\\$1,125,000](#). The total cost of the project is [\\$1,946,700](#).

I/We understand that if this project is approved for funding by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission, before we receive project funds we will be required to:

- Sign a Grant Agreement containing the terms and conditions upon which funds will be released including submission of necessary permits;
- Obtain landowner and maintenance agreements if needed;
- Sign a certification to comply with state, federal and local regulations if needed;
- Submit a completion report to the Board on project performance.

I/We understand that if this application results in an access grant, ODFW will publicize my/our property via printed documents and internet for the purpose of helping hunters locate private lands that may be open to hunting. I/We will cooperate with ODFW to post signs indicating public hunting access at the project location.

I certify that either:

I am the sole landowner of the Property where the Access and Habitat Project will occur.

I am an authorized representative of the landowner of the property where the Access and Habitat project will occur.

I am leasing the property from the landowner and the lease allows me to enter into this agreement.

I have the legal authority to enter into a grant agreement for this Access and habitat project because: _____

(Fill in details – for example: “The project is on three parcels; one is owned by me, one is owned by my wife, and one is owned by our family farm business”).

Grantee Signature: [Joe Justice](#) _____

Date: [August 25, 2025](#) _____

Position: [Manulife Region Manager](#) _____

ACCESS & HABITAT PROGRAM

Application for Grant Funds

1. **Project Title:** Manulife Access Area of NE Oregon
2. **Applicant:** Manulife Investment Management Forest Management Inc.
Phone: (541)962-2048
Grantee: Manulife Investment Management Forest Management Inc. (As will appear on contract/payments)
If private nonprofit, attach IRS letter of 501(c) (3) status
Address: 1919 Jackson Street
City/State/Zip: La Grande / Oregon / 97850 **Phone:** (541)962-2048
Email: jjustice@manulife.com
3. **Location:** ODFW Region East Region
Watershed District / Wildlife Management Unit: Grande Ronde and John Day Watersheds / Catherine Creek, Mt. Emily, Sled Springs, Starkey, Sumpter, Ukiah, Walla Walla & Wenaha Wildlife Management Units (WMU's)
County: Baker, Umatilla, Union & Wallowa Counties
Township/Range/Section: T1-4N; R40-45E, and T3-5S; R40-41E, T1-2S; R35-36E, and T2S-T2N; R34-36E. (~ 300 sq. mi.)- Please See Attached Maps
4. **Type of Project:**
Habitat Improvement Access Damage
5. **Number of acres of habitat to be improved:** N/A
6. **Number of acres of access to be provided:** 250,000 acres
Welcome to Hunt By Permission Other _____
7. **Proposed Start Date:** 01/01/2026
8. **Proposed End Date:** 12/31/2028
9. **Estimated Cost of Project:** \$1,946,700
10. **Access and Habitat Fund Request:** \$1,125,000
11. **Briefly explain what the project proposes to do:**
This project proposes to pay Manulife Investment Management Forest Management Inc. (Manulife) \$1.50/acre for year-round "Welcome to Hunt" access to 250,000 acres of private lands in NE Oregon to hunt big game (i.e. mule deer, white-tailed deer, Rocky Mountain elk), predators (i.e. bear, cougar, coyote), waterfowl and upland game birds (i.e. pheasant, blue and ruffed grouse, Hungarian partridge, California quail and wild turkey).
12. **Habitat and Landscape:** Describe the habitat and landscape of the project area.

Manulife lands are dominated by managed forested timberlands, with grassland foothills and open meadows that provide important winter range, summer range, and year-round wildlife habitat.

13. **Background:** Describe the project area and explain the wildlife habitat and/or access challenge or opportunity this project will address. Address how current management actions benefit public access and/or wildlife and their habitat needs.

Throughout NE Oregon, Manulife Investment Management Forest Management Inc. (Manulife) owns lands in eight Wildlife Management Unit's (WMU), with the largest portions of ownership occurring in some of the most highly desirable WMU's in all of Oregon. For example, Manulife lands in the Wenaha WMU receive high use from early April through the end of December each year. The Wenaha WMU offers limited opportunity for Big Game hunters, sometimes taking as many as 22-23 years to draw the highly coveted Wenaha Branch Bull Tag. In the Sled Springs WMU, where 79% of the land base is under private ownership, this project will continue to provide important access to hunters who would otherwise have a difficult time finding opportunities to hunt. Roughly 1,000 big game hunters annually choose to hunt on land owned by Manulife in the Sled Springs WMU alone. Manulife's land base across NE Oregon is heavily utilized by the public for hunting and fishing access, as well as general recreational use opportunities, often rivaling use on adjacent national forest lands.

A variety of hunting opportunities exist on Manulife lands, including mule deer, white-tailed deer, Rocky Mountain elk, pheasant, Hungarian partridge, California quail, turkey, waterfowl, bear, cougar and coyote. With many of the Travel Management Area's (TMA) and access area lands bordering public lands, there is a strong possibility that big game will be pushed off adjacent public and private lands onto Manulife lands. Adjacent private lands have a long-standing history of chronic elk damage and the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) addresses elk damage in these areas with hunting opportunities that begin in early August and run through November annually. Increasing hunter access to private lands substantially helps ODFW's ability to influence elk distribution and manage population levels.

Continuing this partnership between Manulife and the A&H Program will not only benefit the hunters that so greatly desire these lands but will continue to be a role model of how the A&H Program and private landowners can work together to successfully provide high quality access projects.

14. **Past A&H History:** Describe any past Access & Habitat project, especially if the proposed project deals with continuation or amendment to a past project.

Manulife's land base has remained open to public access throughout the past 50+ years. In NE Oregon, public access to Manulife lands has traditionally been supported by A&H grants: 95017, 96020, 97010, 97059, 99009, 2000-23, 2001-02, 2002-06, 2003-38, 2004-12, 2005-20, 2007-29, 2013-02, 2014-13, 2016-16 and 2022-01. Past A&H Program funds were used to provide full-time staffing for an ODFW technician for 10 months each year. Working with Manulife and ODFW biologists, this technician was primarily responsible for: (a) preparing gates and signage in advance of hunting seasons and maintaining the latter during hunts; (b) patrolling Travel Management Areas year around; (c) setting and maintaining remote, motion

sensor surveillance cameras, (d) reporting TMA violations to the Oregon State Police, and (e) reporting project results in written format. These activities have ensured that public access and hunting are supportive of state law and landowner resource-protection rules are enforced. In 2016, the direction of the grant application changed, and the decision to pursue an access payment in lieu of dedicated technician was pursued. This decision was not taken lightly. Manulife was not dissatisfied with the Access and Habitat Program nor the years of partnership and service it had rendered. Manulife has analyzed and identified opportunities to generate additional revenue through the sale of access permits and fee hunting on lands in NE Oregon. The company has experience with fee access and fee hunting operations in other parts of the United States; however, it is because of the years of partnership and collaboration that this application is being submitted. Wanting to maintain public access and continue to foster additional relationships between Manulife and ODFW are the driving forces behind this application.

In addition to the numerous A&H projects, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has also cooperatively completed the installation of wildlife friendly fencing, riparian fencing, forage seeding(s) and noxious weed control projects on Manulife lands. It is also important to note that a working Cooperative Agreement exists between Manulife and ODFW supporting ODFW efforts to effectively manage fish and wildlife populations and their respective habitats.

15. **Hunter Use Data:** New Projects: Must give estimates of expected usage and how usage will be assessed. Old Projects: Use Access Area Permit data, vehicle or pedestrian counts, hunter interviews, etc.

Hunter use, satisfaction, and harvest information is collected annually by ODFW East Region Staff and the Oregon State Police through field and office correspondence with constituents. In addition to agency efforts, Manulife Security also collects and interviews property users. It is difficult to collect hunter use data for these lands as ownership occurs throughout four counties and eight different WMU's, creating a land base that allows for hundreds of different access points. The NE Region A&H Program Coordinator, Manulife Information Line, and Manulife Office Staff receive a high volume of information requests annually. Support for this project and the desire to maintain the partnership are undoubtedly the focal point of many of those conversations.

MANULIFE ACCESS AREA of NE OREGON

- Data in Blue was provided by ODFW. Please note that this information is for all big game seasons occurring during the 2023 season.
- Data in Green is calculated numbers by Manulife Forest Management Staff and are based upon assumptions of the percentage of ownership within a hunt unit and a disproportionate use factor as private property open to public use.

Hunt Name	Hunt Unit	# of Hunters (All Big Game)	Hunter Use Days	Days Per Hunter	% Private Lands in the Unit	% Manulife Ownership of Hunt Unit	Disproportionate Use Factor	Total
Starkey	52	5,408	40,518	7.49	33%	10%	5%	15%
Catherine Creek	53	2,509	14,220	5.67	76%	15%	5%	20%
Mt Emily	54	2,162	14,510	6.71	56%	10%	5%	15%
Wenaha	56	1,575	10,436	6.63	30%	15%	5%	20%
Sled Springs	57	3,947	23,294	5.90	79%	30%	10%	40%
Starkey	52	811	6,078					
Catherine Creek	53	502	2,844					
Mt Emily	54	324	2,177					
Wenaha	56	315	2,087					
Sled Springs	57	1,579	9,318					
TOTALS		3,531	22,503	6.37				

16. **Project Objective(s):**

(a) What is the objective of the proposed project?

Provide "Welcome to Hunt" public hunting access to 250,000 acres of Manulife lands in NE Oregon, beginning January 1, 2026, and ending December 31, 2028.

(b) How will the project benefit wildlife habitat?

N/A

(c) Select species that will benefit from **habitat** improvements:

Big Game

- Deer
- Elk
- Bear
- Cougar
- Pronghorn
- Bighorn Sheep
- Mountain Goat

Upland Bird

- Chukar
- Mountain Quail
- Valley Quail
- Pheasants
- Forest Grouse
- Turkey
- Gray Partridge
- Sage Grouse

Migratory Game Bird

- Ducks
- Geese
- American Coot
- Wilsons Snipe
- Mourning Dove
- Band Tailed Pigeon

(d) Length of time benefits provided <3yr 3-6yr >6yr

Examples of Project Benefit Duration

Noxious weed.....2yrs	Forage planting.....5yrs	Aspen fencing.....10yrs
Range fertilization...2yrs	Forest thinning.....5yrs	Aspen plant/fence.....10yrs
Rx Fire-grassland.....2yrs	Aspen (conifer removal)....5yrs	Road closure.....10yrs
Rx Fire-forested.....3yrs	Juniper removal.....7yrs	Road decommission....10yrs
Fence Removal.....10yrs	Water Dev/Enhancement.10yrs	

(Source: Blue Mountains Elk Initiative Project Evaluation Criteria)

(e) How will the project benefit public access? If limited access, how many hunters will be permitted?

The project will provide year-round public hunting access to 250,000 acres of highly desirable private timberlands throughout NE Oregon. In addition to the popularity of the access area(s), this project will continue to provide access to areas that receive chronic big game damage, helping to support ODFW's efforts to address big game distribution issues.

(f) Select species for which public access will provided:

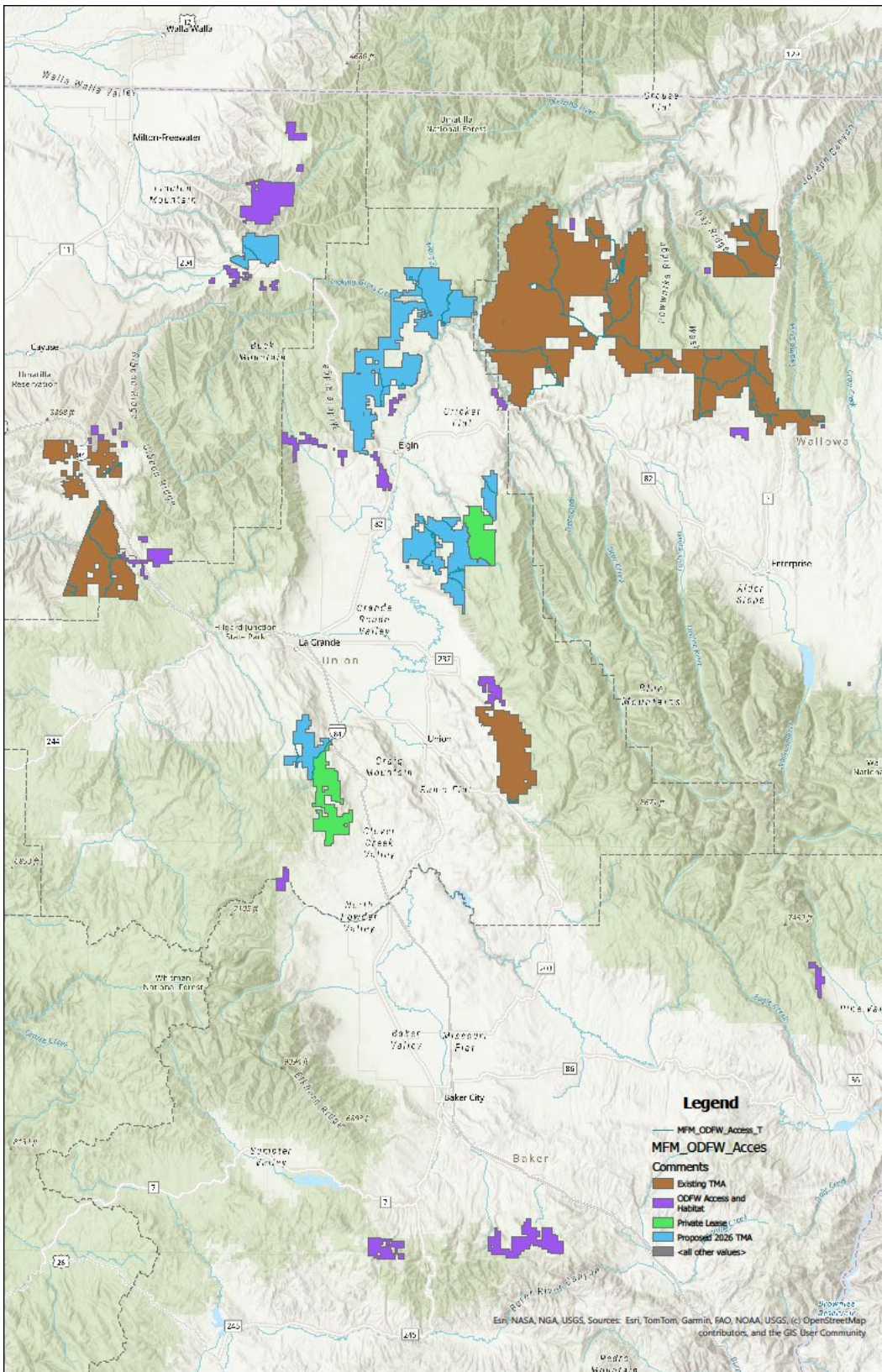
<u>Big Game</u>	<u>Upland Bird</u>	<u>Migratory Game Bird</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deer	<input type="checkbox"/> Chukar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ducks
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elk	<input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Quail	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geese
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bear	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Valley Quail	<input type="checkbox"/> American Coot
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cougar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pheasants	<input type="checkbox"/> Wilsons Snipe
<input type="checkbox"/> Pronghorn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forest Grouse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove
<input type="checkbox"/> Bighorn Sheep	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Turkey	<input type="checkbox"/> Band Tailed Pigeon
<input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Goat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gray Partridge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Other</u> : Coyote
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sage Grouse	

(g) If damage related, how will the project alleviate/eliminate the problem?

This project helps to address damage by providing motorized-free security areas. The security and solitude that is provided by the TMA's and access areas continues to attract and house big game animals longer, helping to reduce damage complaints on adjacent private agricultural and timberlands. The project will assist ODFW in addressing elk damage that is currently occurring on private lands by providing public hunting access to adjacent private lands. ODFW utilizes hunters to help address these damage complaints. A hunt structure that allows hunters to pursue elk from early August through the end of November is currently in place. Continuing to provide greater access to private lands will increase hunter success and assist ODFW in addressing chronic damage complaints and elk distribution issues.

17. **Project Location:** Attach a map and provide description of the location and how to get there from a major highway.

Manulife TMA's and access areas are located throughout Baker, Umatilla, Union and Wallowa counties in NE Oregon. Primary access points are provided from publicly owned roads and via maintained Manulife roads that allow for motorized use. Please see the attached 2025 TMA and A&H maps for specific TMA and access area locations (Exhibit A). Beginning in 2026, motorized use on all Manulife lands will be designated to open roads shown in green on maps (please see map below).



18. **Procedure:** Specifically describe how the project will be conducted--use separate page for additional information, drawings, or pictures.

Year-round public hunting access will be allowed January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028, encompassing all hunting seasons (i.e. big game, predators, small game, upland bird seasons &

waterfowl). A color map will be produced by ODFW and available to public hunters. The landowner will be provided with the standard A&H signs such as: "Welcome to Hunt", "Closed to Motorized Vehicles", "Entering Cooperative Travel Management Area", "Opportunity provided in Cooperation with the A&H Program", etc. Manulife and ODFW staff will continue to perform annual maintenance of kiosks and posting of TMA and access area signs.

Cooperative Travel Management Area rules:

- Restrictions identified on pages 82 and 83 of the 2025 ODFW Big Game Hunting Regulations, specifically state that "Through cooperative agreement, motor vehicle use, including electric assisted bicycles, is limited to specific roads for dates and areas listed". The effective period for all Manulife Cooperative Travel Management Areas is year-round.

Access Area rules:

- Manulife may implement specific land use restrictions when fire season is implemented by the Oregon Department of Forestry.
 - Only those roads shown in green, and the adjacent area within 300 feet of those roads, are open to motorized vehicles.
 - Motorized vehicle travel within the access area boundary is prohibited except by special permit from the landowner or land managing agency. Cross-country travel is not allowed.
 - E-bikes are not permitted on Manulife lands.
 - Snowmobiles will be subject to these travel restrictions prior to the end of the last deer and/or elk hunting season in each calendar year, but snow machines will be exempt from travel restrictions thereafter and during the period from January 1 through the last day of spring turkey season.
 - During all closure periods, normal forest management activities including logging, grazing, and slash disposal may be in progress. Please be aware of heavy logging traffic. No one involved in these operations is allowed to hunt, transport game or hunters while using vehicles in the closed area(s).
 - Use caution with firearms.
 - Leave a clean camp! Please don't pound nails into live trees. If you must build a latrine, remove all building materials and cover the trench before you leave.
 - Do not cut down snags!
 - Do not leave camp or warming fires unattended.
 - During periods of high fire danger, camping, and campfires may be prohibited.
 - There is a 14-day stay limit for camping.
 - All hay and straw used by hunters for horse and mule feed or bedding must be certified free of noxious weeds. This requirement is necessary to limit the spread of noxious weeds.
 - The landing of aircraft is prohibited within the closure area except for emergencies and authorized by MFM as part of land management activities.
19. **Permits:** Have all of the appropriate permits been secured or applied for? Examples: Water Resources Department for water rights, Division of State Lands for fill-removal or wetlands projects.

There are no permits necessary for this project.

20. **Scheduling:** What is the estimated project schedule?

- a. Habitat Work Start Date: N/A
Habitat Work Completion Date: N/A
- b. Access Agreement Start Date: 01/01/2026
Access Agreement End Date: 12/31/2028
- c. List major project activities and time schedule for each:

Activity	Time (month/year)
1. <u>"Welcome to Hunt" Access</u>	<u>January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028</u>
2. <u>Maintain Kiosk & Check-in / Check-out Station</u>	<u>Annually</u>
3. <u>Patrol, Sign & Post Property</u>	<u>Annually</u>

21. **Participation and Funding:** Will other organizations or individuals participate in the project? If so, list and describe participation, and attach letters of commitment or verification of grant awards. Costs listed here must be included in "Other Funds" column of the Project Budget (Section 23).

Participant	Activity	Cost
Manulife	Manulife maintains all gates and roads within the TMA's and access areas at no cost to the hunting public. The company distributes maps, issues road closure permits to contractors and neighboring private landowners and provides general information to the public about access. Additionally, Manulife employs a full-time security officer that enforces company rules and reports TMA/access area/wildlife violations to the appropriate enforcement agencies.	Please see Section 23 Budget

Have any conditions been placed on the funds listed above which may affect the completion of the project? If so, identify and explain. YES NO

22. Project Maintenance and Monitoring:

(a) Who will maintain the project and fund long-term maintenance and/or operation if needed?

ODFW and Manulife will work cooperatively to post signs, maintain kiosks and solve any issues that may arise from the use of the property.

A dedicated Manulife Security Officer patrols the properties year-round. ODFW and the Oregon State Police will continue to include the TMA's and access areas during hunting season patrols.

(b) What element(s) of the project will be monitored, how often, for how long?

Hunter use, satisfaction, and harvest information will be collected annually by ODFW East Region Staff and the Oregon State Police through field and office correspondence with constituents. Entry Point Kiosks and appropriate project signage will be monitored monthly to ensure project information is adequately displayed.

23. Project Budget Narrative: (Provide details; describe in-kind funding; provide narratives here of non-itemized entries in your worksheet.)

ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST STRUCTURE FOR MANULIFE COOPERATIVE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT AREAS

Area	Type	Item or Activity	Units	Annual MANULIFE
Estimated Costs Annual				
Roads	OP	Gate and barricade construction/repair	10 structures	\$64,000
Roads	OP	Road maintenance & repair activities caused by general public use	1 year	\$65,000
Security	OP	Manulife security personnel	Staff costs	\$120,000
Costs Estimated from Annual Expenditures				
Admin.	OP	Lock purchase (lock cost and staff time)	2 man day	\$6000
Admin.	OP	Cooperative travel management area agreement (preparation)	1 man day	\$900
Admin.	OP	Administration of road closure permits (mat. & labor)	5 man days	\$4,500
Admin.	OP	Assistance to OSP, ODFW, and hunters (by office staff and foresters, annually)	15 man days	\$13,500
Total Annual Costs				
All Areas	OP	Subtotal for out-of-pocket costs		\$273,900

Code Comments:

Type: OP = out-of-pocket expenditure.

Units: Personnel requirements are presented in terms of FTE (Full Time Equivalent), man months, or man days, as appropriate.

Other

Notes:

In each case, the estimated cost includes the value of personnel (if previously listed under "Units"), and the cost of materials. For example, the cost of lock purchase includes the cost of labor (1 man day), plus the actual cost of locks purchased.

Project Cost Estimate: (provide as much detail as possible)

Category	A&H Funds	Manulife	Total Cost
Administration			
Personnel		\$360,000	
Benefits @ 64%			
Prep/TMA/Assist		\$56,700	
Total Admin.		\$416,700	
Construction Materials²			
Road Maintenance		\$195,000	
Gates/Barricades		\$192,000	
Supplies			
Recreation Maps			
Locks		\$18,000	
Access Payment			
250,000 acres @ \$1.50/acre for 3 years	\$1,125,000		
TOTAL COSTS	\$1,125,000	\$821,700	

¹ List detail in funding .

² Provide amounts and cost per unit.

³ Attach subcontractor estimates.

⁴ Individual pieces of equipment costing over \$100.00.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Access Year	Payment	Request for Funds Submitted:
January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026	\$375,000	No earlier than January 1, 2026
January 1, 2027 – December 31, 2027	\$375,000	No earlier than January 1, 2027
January 1, 2028 – December 31, 2028 (10% withheld until receipt of completion report)	\$262,500	No earlier than January 1, 2028
Final Payment	\$112,500	No earlier than January 1, 2029